SENATE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

LANSING, MICHIGAN

For Immediate Release Sen. Hansen Clarke (D-Detroit) Sen. Mark Schauer (D-Battle Creek) May 4, 2005 517/373-7346 517/373-2426

VIDEO GAME CRACKDOWN CONFIRMS DEMOCRATIC CONCERNS Senate Democrats React to Findings

(Lansing-MI) Senate Democrats renewed their call for action today following the release of some of the details of a statewide undercover crackdown of retailers who sell adult-rated video games to children. Democrats stated that the shocking results- to be fully announced this afternoon by Governor Jennifer Granholm- only underscore the necessity and urgency of their legislation.

"Today's announcement makes moot any argument that this legislation is unnecessary," said Sen. **Mark Schauer** (D-Battle Creek) "We have a responsibility to Michigan's families to make sure this type of material is not making its way into the hands of children."

The voluntary undercover operations, carried out in Bay, Cass, Lenawee, Monroe, Genesee, Ingham, and Wayne County found that unchaperoned children, as young as 9-years-old, had no difficulty purchasing adult-rated video games in Michigan. In one county, 8 out of 13 retailers sold adult-rated games to minor children.

"As a mother, I am very disturbed to learn that a 9-year-old can walk into a store and walk out with something like *Grand Theft Auto* or *The Guy Game*," said Sen. **Gilda Z. Jacobs**. "Under the current system, parents are powerless to stop businesses from selling this material to their children."

State Sen. **Hansen Clarke** (D-Detroit) introduced legislation earlier this year that would prohibit the sale or rental of adult-rated video games to anyone under the age of 17. Retailers or video rental businesses that knowingly provide M (Mature) or AO (Adult Only) rated games to minors could face up to one year in jail and a maximum \$5,000 fine.

"Those businesses already behaving ethically toward our children have nothing to fear from this legislation," said Sen. Clarke. "It's only those businesses that aren't taking their responsibility to the public seriously that would be impacted."

Senate Democrats are currently holding four public hearings around the state gathering data and testimony on the video game issue. Their hearings also serve to educate parents as to the graphic nature of some of today's top-selling video games.

"We have come a long way since the days of Pac Man and Super Mario Brothers," said Sen. **Deb Cherry** (D-Burton). "Some of today's mature-rated games are far too violent or sexually explicit for most adults to tolerate. Children should not be able to legally purchase this material on their own."

Last week, Senate Republicans blocked an effort by Senate Democrats to move the video game legislation out of the Senate Judiciary Committee. The effort failed on a party line vote, 4-3.

"No parent should have to worry that their underage child has unchecked access to violent and highly sexualized video games," said Sen. **Clark-Coleman** (D-Detroit).

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